

the Grapevine

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15:5

From the Principal's Desk



A couple of weeks before each semester's exam period, teachers meet to discuss how to set good questions, mark answers and compile reports for parents. At these meetings we also remind ourselves not to measure one child's performance against that of another. As parents at the school, you've probably heard how damaging academic competition can be, particularly for weaker children, and how it contributes to performance anxiety. Recently I've been thinking about why this is the case, not only for children who struggle, but also for children who either excel, or have the potential to excel, not only academically, but in other areas too, like sport. And why more and more children who display competence in these areas eventually give up their pursuit of excellence.

In one of his books, US physician and author, Dr Leonard Sax, suggests that one of the main reasons is because children these days value their peer relationships and their self-concept more than they value their relationship with their parents. For example, after a tryout for first-team soccer, a high school boy who shows genuine potential doesn't work at what he needs to in order to make the team, because he doesn't want to look weak or like a failure in the eyes of his friends. Or, a girl who has always been top of her class but eventually gets 'beaten' by a classmate in a Maths test, falls apart and literally goes into depression as a result because she cares more about her academic achievement than the unconditional acceptance of her parents. The result? A culture of success, because success is the easiest way to impress peers and self. The irony is that failure is inevitable. It will come - sooner or later. And often its effects are devastating.

But, says Sax, "The willingness to fail and then to move on with no loss of enthusiasm, is a mark of character. When kids are secure in the unconditional acceptance of their parents, they can find the courage to venture and to fail. When kids value the good regard of their peers or their own self-concept above the good regard of their parents, they lose the willingness to fail. They become fragile."

So what can we do to help our children deal with the "culture of success"? Some practical ideas:

- Let's not give our children rewards for good grades. There is a deep sense of satisfaction to be found in working hard and well and then appreciating the results. That in itself will inspire further effort.
- Let's not punish our children for weakness. Instead, let's develop ways to support them in a relational way - it's far healthier and makes them feel accepted regardless of how they perform.
- Let's put family first and strengthen healthy relationships with our children. Spend more time with them without their friends being present. Love and accept them unconditionally - something that children and even most young adults don't yet have the capacity to do. In fact, most of the time, peer relationships are conditional and thus fragile.
- Let's not mollycoddle our children by trying to protect them from failure. Let's rather teach them that failure and struggle are part of life and, in fact, necessary for growth. Even share with them, where appropriate, how our own failures and struggles contributed to our growth.
- Let's model to our children what it means to trust the Lord to help us to "... *throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*" Hebrews 12:11

For the children's sake

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "I. Smith".

Ian Smith
Principal

What we do and why

Monart Art Programme

Often when we think about art done by children we think about the typical symbolic stick figure drawings. This type of drawing is naturally done by children all over the world and is important for self-expression and language development but it should not be compared to realistic drawing. Realistic drawing, unlike symbolic drawing, needs guidance and instruction and that is what our Monart art programme achieves. Realistic drawing is not in conflict with symbolic drawing and children should be encouraged to do both since their objectives are different. When children draw realistically they are building visual perception, concentration, and problem-solving abilities along with language development. When they naturally give up symbolic drawing they can easily make the transition into the creatively sophisticated styles of drawing done by older teen and adult artists.



(the content of the article is based on Drawing with Children by Mona Brookes)

All pictures in this section are drawn by Kindergarten children at The Vine School.



Kids Right to Good Sight

Since 2008 we have helped nearly 300 000 children through our Kids Right to Good Sight initiative.

With parents' permission, we offer a free eye test, pair of frames and clear lenses for South African children aged 6 to 12 years to dramatically improve their lives.

Contact your nearest specsavers for more details.

Did you know?

You can link your Woolies card to your beneficiary.



If you have a Woolworths card please make sure that your card is linked to us. Every time you shop you can help us! Call or email MySchool to make sure your card is linked.

Update your profile here:

Online on www.myschool.co.za, Call 0860 100 445

Email cs@myschool.co.za

March and April figures

March R936.99

April R826.23

Our 2014 Grade 7 students are in Matric this year and we recently contacted them to find out how they are doing and what their plans are for next year. Here is some news from two of them.

Abbygail Jacobs is attending the Ambleside School of Hout Bay and volunteers at the Two Oceans Aquarium. She says, "My fondest memory of The Vine School is Mrs Zyster teaching me Geography. I will never forget the songs she taught us in order to remember the continents, countries and oceans."



She hopes to go to Stellenbosch University to study Microbiology or Ancient Cultures and Linguistics.

Abbygail's advice to this year's Grade 7s is, "High school is scary but it's a good scary. There will be challenges along the way but there will be triumphs too. Stay strong, be brave and do your best, work hard and when you get to matric it will be worth it."

Where are they now?



Lawson Mangisi is attending El Shaddai Christian School and is the school Prefect who is Head of Operations. He has been part of their first team hockey for the past 3 years.

He says that his fondest memory of The Vine School is, "the small lunch breaks we had in grade 7 where we would all sit as a class and enjoy our food before we went out and played. I must say it felt like a family."

Lawson hopes to go to university to study Accounting next year or go into the Computer Science field. He hopes to obtain his qualifications in South Africa but wouldn't mind an opportunity to study abroad.

His advice to the current grade 7s is, "Enjoy the good times you have with each other now because you don't know what the future holds."

Another piece of advice would be to have a good work ethic which will help you in high school and in life. I also would like to tell



them that they should stick to their integrity, it will get them far in life."



Both Abbygail and Lawson took part in The Vine School's Shakespeare production of The Merchant of Venice.

(We would love to hear from our Alumni. Tell us what you are up to and share your memories of your time here at The Vine.)

Save The Date

July

9 Term 3 starts (Tuesday)

15 Afternoon Sports Programme starts

18 Mandela Day (not a public holiday)

August

1 Growth Report Meeting (School Closed)

9 Womens' Day

September

7 Festival of Theatre

12 Workshop for Parents

13 Term 2 ends

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